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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

43733

ref: 36117

12 March 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL WALTER B. SMITH
DIRECTOR OF CIA

Subject: Information Requested of the Norwegian Government
Reference Soviet Activity on Spitzbergen

On 11 December 1950, you forwarded to me, as U.S. representative to the Standing Group, a list of questions pertaining to Soviet activity on Spitzbergen. As you will see from the attached, these questions were submitted to the Norwegian representative to the Standing Group.

The Norwegian reply has been received and is herewith forwarded to you.

This information was requested on the basis that it was needed by the United States for its part in NATO planning. In order that this basis could be sustained in case the matter comes up later, I have taken the liberty of allowing Admiral Wright, my deputy to the Standing Group; Admiral Davis, Director of the Joint Staff; and General Megee, head of the Intelligence Section of the Joint Staff, to read this report before forwarding it to you. As far as I know it has not been seen by anyone else.

Walter B. Bradley

Attachment

DOS review(s) completed.

JCS review(s) completed.

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REAR ADMIRAL JOHS. E. JACOBSEN
ACCREDITED NORWEGIAN REPRESENTATIVE TO THE
STANDING GROUP OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE

2362 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Ref.: 239/115.4/51/RMS/ST.

March 6, 1951.

Vice Admiral Jerauld Wright, U.S.N.,
U.S. Representative to the Standing Group,
Room 2 E - 854, The Pentagon,
Washington, D.C.

Subject: Request for information to be furnished
by the Norwegian Government re Soviet
Activity on Spitzbergen.

Dear Admiral,

With reference to your request about
information re Soviet Activity on Spitzbergen,
I have the pleasure of forwarding as an enclo-
sure the Norwegian reply to your Memorandum
dated December 1950.

Yours Sincerely

Johns. E. Jacobsen
Johns. E. Jacobsen
Rear Admiral, R. Nor. N.

12 Encl.

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Information re Soviet activity.

Note : In this report the term Svalbard is employed throughout, meaning the area limited by the 10. and 35. meridian and the 47. and 81. parallel.

1. The following compilation is arranged corresponding to the headings and subheadings of the request.

a. Soviet installations and facilities.

(1) Military installations.

Norwegian authorities have no indication of military installations in these areas. It is considered unlikely that the Soviet under the present situation should violate the Svalbard Treaty by openly erecting military installations in their settlements.

(2) Radio and Radar installations.

i. Radio.

All Russian settlements have W/T stations. Pyramiden, Grumant, Coles Bay, Bohemanneset correspond with Barentsburg where the main wireless establishment is located. This station maintains the main contact between Russia and the settlements. Barentsburg Radio also acts as a contact for Russian shipping in those waters. A longwave R/T connection between Pyramiden and Russia (Moscow ?) was in operation at one time, but has now been dropped. The known location of the wireless installations are given in the appropriate settlement plans (para. a, (5)).

ii. Radar.

No information, see also para f (5).

(3) Airfields and seadromes.

i. Airfields.

The Russians have no airfields in operation in the islands. During the winter season it is possible to operate quite heavy aircraft off the fjord ice, near any of the Russian settlements. Operations of this type have not been reported. Within the Russian Treaty areas there is only one place - Bohemanneset, where an airfield of any importance may be constructed. In this area Russian activity was not observed until the summer of 1950, when the Russians put up accommodation for approximately 30 men (by Russian standard) and commenced surveying and prospecting. The ostensible reason for this activity is coal mining. The development is kept under surveillance for any signs of other

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activity.

ii. Seadromes.

The Russians have no regular seadrome in commission. The fjord at Barentsburg has been visited by a Russian Catalina during the summer of 1947. The fjord at Pyramiden and the bight of Coles Bay also afford sheltered stretches of water for seaplane operation.

(4) Port facilities at the Russian settlements.

i. Barentsburg.

Barentsburg has one quay for ocean-going shipping (up to 10,000 tons) and a small pier for lighters. The quay has a conveyer coal-loading apparatus, no heavy cranes reported. Spacious warehouses of solid construction on the dock. The quay is connected with storage areas by narrow-gauge rail.

ii. Coles Bay.

One pier, extending past the shallow, is evidently intended for direct loading of coal by conveyer belt into ocean-going ships. Was near completion autumn 1950. Another shorter pier is used for lighter handling. Flat beaches employed for storing timber. Wharf for lighter repairs in operation.

iii. Grumant City.

No facilities for ocean-going ships. One small pier for lighters that are employed for loading and unloading ships.

iiii. Pyramiden.

One pier with coal-loading equipment, capable of handling ships up to approximately 4,000 tons. Flat beaches and delta of river used for storage purposes.

v. Lighters.

A number of miscellaneous lighters, landing craft and small tugs are employed in the harbours and in the internal traffic in the island.

(5) and (6) Plans and detailed information already dispatched.

(7) Tower-like installations at Pyramiden.

These towers are boring derricks (Norwegian: bore-tårn), and are employed by the Russians in the detailed geological survey of their areas. The positions of towers in Pyramiden seem to correspond with the survey plan shown to the Norwegian Inspector of Mines in 1948.

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Note: Expert opinion gives system of geological faults in the area as reason for the need of detailed profile borings (see also para. g (5)).

(8) Soviet meteorological activities.

Meteorological observation posts are maintained at Barentsburg and Pyramiden. (see also para. f (4).)

b. New construction and expansion.

(1) We are not aware of proved airfield construction projects. One possible site is under survey and preparation. (para. a (3) i).

(a) Gipsvika, not well suited for airfield construction. No evidence of Russian activity.

(b) Advent Bay, may with some effort be adapted to landing ground. As mentioned in the request the site is controlled by a Norwegian firm and under constant observation. No Russian activity is possible in the area without infringement on Norwegian rights.

(c) 1. Banso (Adventdal, not Avental as given in the request). The name Banso is not known in this department, but is thought to refer to flat sandy island in the delta of the Advent River, used to some extent by German Ju 88 during the war. Also under Norwegian control and surveillance.

2. Sveagruva. Flat stretches of land in this area are not considered suitable for operation of other than light communication aircraft. Development in Kjellströmdalen area may be possible, but utilization will be hampered by high and close mountains. This area is held by a Norwegian firm, which has its own caretaker in the area. Russian activity in this area will thus be noted at once.

3. Kap Heer (not Kap Herr as given in the request). Not considered suitable for airfield construction. Area held by Russians and under active mining development.

4. Hotelnesset. Refers to same area as in para. (b) above.

5. Quade Hoek (official name: Kvadehuken). Large level area with stony ground. Development possible, but difficult. Under Norwegian control and surveillance.

6. Kap Ekholm. Not suitable. Case of misnaming (?)

7. Calypsobyen, slightly sloping moraine terrace. Construction of airfield in this area will en-

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tail considerable effort. An old mining settlement to some extent provides emergency housing. Area normally depopulated. Quite good anchorage off-shore.

Remarks on the question of airfield construction in Svalbard.

The sites given in the request and accounted for above are only part of the possible airfield projects in the archipelago. Excepting Bohemannesset, where the Russians have been observed carrying out survey and constructing quarters for a limited number of personnel (appr. 30), it is not considered that any other area under Russian control will lend itself to construction of airfields for other than light aircraft. In addition to the sites mentioned in the request, there are, especially along the west coast of Spitsbergen, many areas where the construction of airfields is feasible, but no Russian activity has been observed.

It should in this connection be noted that the areas which, after analysis, seem to lend themselves best to the construction of airfields, have been checked for foreign activity by reconnaissance flights every summer since 1948.

(2) Construction in underground spaces.

The underground facilities of the Russian settlements consist of the galleries of elder and more recent mines. The old mines east of the Barentsburg settlements are in this connection of special interest as they are considered suitable for underground storage because of their close vicinity to the Russian harbour and the narrow gauge railway leading to the mine entrance. It is assumed that these mines, even though they are not under exploitation, are to a certain extent kept open. It should be noted that the mining galleries of the coal mines in Spitsbergen are in most cases driven horizontally into the mountain side, and thus for storage purposes afford easy access and handling of goods. Other possible storage areas are the mines at Kap Heer, connected to Barentsburg harbour by rail, the old mines south of Grumant City, which supposedly will be connected to a pier at Coles Bay by underground tunnel and rail.

Note: Construction of underground tunnel to connect Grumant City and Coles Bay is considered justified in that it will give the mines at Grumant satisfactory outlet.

Pyramiden: The mines in this area are not of great extent and are not considered suitable for storage. The greater dimensions of the coal layers will make possible the exploitation of these mines for underground quarters.

(3) Increase in living accommodation.

We have not observed any great increase in the construction of living accommodation except as given in the following paragraph.

(4) It seems to be the Russian plan to increase operation

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in the Coles Bay area, as indicated by the construction of a pier capable of handling ocean-going ships, the assumed preparations for rail connection with Grumant, and the erecting of several new houses (hutments).

c. Soviet traffic.

(1) Aircraft movements. No Soviet aircraft has been reported in the archipelago during the last year. In 1947 the then Director of Mines, Mr. Naumkin, arrived in Spitsbergen by Catalina, presumably out of Murmansk.

(2) No information.

(3) No information.

(4) Russian shipping. About 12 - 15 ships, of tonnage varying between 1 - 4.000 tons, of a gross tonnage of approximately 30.000 tons, are employed in the traffic between Russia and Svalbard.

The shipping season is governed by the ice conditions, as the Russians have not, since the winter 46/47, employed any heavy ice-breakers in this area. In 1950 the first Russian ship arrived in May and the last ship left Spitsbergen in late November. The traffic during last season has been approximately the same as during the previous seasons.

(5) Tonnage shipped.

Official reports have not yet been received by Norwegian authorities. The estimate of the tonnage shipped, as based on the surveillance of shipping movements is 90 - 100.000 tons, as compared to 105.000 tons during 1949.

(6) Ingoing traffic.

The cargo brought into Russian settlements during the last season, as estimated on the same basis as above, (5), is between 20 - 30.000 tons.

(7) Wireless traffic.

The traffic on the main W/T link between the islands and Russia (Barentsburg-Murmansk) is not heavy compared to the traffic between the Norwegian settlements and Norway. A definite peak in traffic occurs in December, caused mainly by seasonal greetings. This traffic is transmitted by automatic keying. The internal traffic is easily intercepted, as the wireless operators are of relatively low quality. The amount of internal traffic is accounted for by the centralized administration for all Russian settlements in the islands.

Peaks in internal traffic correspond to administrative periods.

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d. Soviet population.

- (1) As contact between the Russian and Norwegian settlements only occurs on rare official visits, the possibility of getting biographical information is very limited.

At present (winter 1950/51) the head of the Russian settlements is consul Ivan Plakutin, about 40, with engineering and Foreign Office training, vice-consul is Mekesjen, about 30 years old.

Head of the mining is engineer Borisov Michailow, about 45, trained by the Leningrad Mining School. Under him two assisting engineers, Borisenko and Babad.

- (2) The total number of Russians with breakdown: -

<u>Place:</u>	<u>Total number of persons:</u>	<u>Grown-ups:</u>	<u>Children:</u>
1. Barentsburg	1.180	1.150	30
2. Grumant	965	950	15
3. Pyramiden	293	287	6
Total number: -	2.438	2.387	51

- (a) See para. a. (1). It may be noted that no military training whatsoever has been observed.

- (b) No information.

- (c) It is considered possible that the consul's assistant and interpreter, Ivanov, may be connected with MVD, the reason being that Ivanov never leaves the consul out of sight, and even insisted on sleeping in the same room at the consul's visit in Longyearbyen.

- (d) No further information.

- (e) There is no sign of forced labour, and as the labourers are very well paid and normally are given one years leave in the south of Russia after 2 - 3 years in Svalbard, it is not considered likely that there should be any reason for using forced labour.

- (3) See (2) above.

- (4) No changeover as mentioned has been noted. There is indication that the previous Director of Mines, Mr. Naumkin, was a major in the Russian air force.

- (5) No information.

e. Soviet coal-mining.

- (1) Monthly average production.

During the last year the Russian production has been estimated at about 160.000 tons, giving an average monthly production of about 12.000 tons.

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(2) Tonnage stored.

At the moment the tonnage stored at the settlement may be estimated roughly at about 50,000 tons (this estimate is based on the assumption that the production this season is slightly higher than last season).

(3) Comparison of Russian and Norwegian production.

A comparison of the ratio of coal tonnage to man hours in Soviet and Norwegian areas, indicates that the Norwegian production per man is about 7 times higher than the Russian.

It should here be taken into consideration that the Norwegian mines are highly mechanized, that the coal is easily accessible, and that the handling and loading facilities are very efficient; whereas the Russians to a large extent lack mechanized equipment, and because of faults and poorer deposits have to make extensive geological surveys, and that their loading facilities in some places are very primitive.

f. Other Soviet activity.

(1) (a) Reports from miscellaneous sources.

Reports by hunters indicate that a Russian depot ship for fishing operated off the coast of Western Spitsbergen in July 1950.

(b) Prospecting.

As mentioned under para. (e) (3) extensive borings and geological studies are carried out by the Russians in their areas. Activities of this sort have not been reported outside the Russian settlements.

(2) Activities outside Russian areas.

No scientific excursions outside the settlements have been reported. There is indication that the Russians have explored the overland route between Coles Bay and Billefjord during the winter of 1949/50.

(3) Security regulations.

The Soviet policy on visitors to the settlements has been more or less the same during the last 3 years. Chance visits are not encouraged, and visitors have in some cases been turned away. Great hospitality is extended to official Norwegian visitors, often to the extent of fully occupying the time the visitors spend at the settlements.

(4) Weather stations.

It is known that Pyramiden and Barentsburg serve as meteorological observation posts. The station at Barentsburg employs weather balloons.

(5) Possible covers for secret electronics installations.

Weather stations, W/T stations and presumably some of the boring derricks may be used as cover for jamming equipment.

It is thought that the installations (boring derricks) on mountain behind Grumant City afford a reasonably good site for early warning radar, covering the western approaches to the island. Even though placing the E.W. equipment at Barentsburg would move the ultimate range towards the west, siting difficulties in this area prove very serious.

(6) See para. b (2).

(7) Gypsum deposits.

There is definite indications that a small quantity of gypsum was mined at Pyramiden last year.

(8) Shale deposits.

Shale deposits in the Russian areas are supposed to be quite extensive.

g. Soviet-Norwegian relations.

(1) Norwegian communist activity.

During the winter 48/49 a small political organisation of communists was formed in the Longyearbyen mining settlement. The movement was not, however, very popular, and the organisation ceased to exist as such during the following summer. Spokesmen of the group have, however, taken active part in local Labour Organisation activity. The clandestine communist activity is supposed to be slight. A rather high incident of fires at the Norwegian settlements have given occasion to some comment. Investigations are in progress to assess whether sabotage may be the cause.

(2) Soviet activity in the Norwegian sector.

The Soviet activity in the Norwegian sector has been limited to rare visits by officials of the Russian settlement, usually in a small combined ice-breaker tug-boat normally stationed in the islands during the shipping season.

The geographic conditions make it possible to maintain secret contact between the Russian and Norwegian settlements. No such contact has been observed, although surveillance with this angle in mind has been in operation to a certain extent.

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(3) Relations to Norwegian inspectors.

The activities of Norwegian inspectors are rather limited by the statutes of the Svalbard Treaty. With regard to the control of Russian internal affairs by Norwegian officials, the tendency has always been to leave the Russians alone as much as possible, and even the limited control specified in the statutes of the Treaty has not been carried out in full.

(4) Pressure on Norwegian authorities.

There is no indication of pressure on Norwegian authorities or other personnel in the islands. Relations between Norwegian and Russian settlements are strictly formal, and of small extent.

(5) Application for extended rights.

In 1947 the Russians in Spitsbergen did approach the Norwegian Governor with inquiries about the possibility of acquiring rights on Prince Charles Foreland and Daumanns-Øyra, both areas well suited as radar sites, and also feasible projects for airfield construction. There has also been some Russian interest regarding the hunter cabins along the coast. Russian interest has also been observed regarding privately owned mining claims. No deals have been reported to date.

It should be noted that under existing rules the Russians may stake claims in any part of the island not already held on concession. Efforts are being made to counter possible Russian efforts of this nature, but without any assurance of success.

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